



Black Sheep Adventures was founded in November, 2002 by Fred Ackerman. A multi-sport adventure tour company, Black Sheep combines biking, hiking, and kayaking on 6-day trips to exotic locations. “We’re designed for the traveler who wants travel off the beaten path,” said Ackerman.

Ackerman has a background in engineering and worked as a management consultant for three years. He always had an interest in travel, but with his heavy work schedule found he never had time to schedule vacations. He then began working for a travel company and eventually decided to open his own business.

Ackerman attended Small Business Administration workshops on basic business skills which helped him develop a business plan, gave him good exposure to available resources, and allowed him to network with other entrepreneurs.

Marketing is Ackerman’s major obstacle. He did not realize how many contacts it was necessary to make in order to get the word out about his business and obtain clients. “The level of time it takes and focus can be overwhelming,” he said. Free counseling through SCORE, a volunteer branch of SBA, has helped organize his efforts to promote the company and given him a clearer idea about what’s needed.

“We’ve upgraded our websites seriously and started an online newsletter to keep our customers in the loop and let new people know about upcoming adventure.”
Ackerman said.

Black Sheep's' business has grown and is successful. For the 2005 season, Ackerman organized trips to Baja, Cape Cod, Death Valley, and Holland, and has plans to someday lead a trip in Australia.

“I think the reason people like our trips so much, is because we’re so flexible. You can go all out or you can just sit back and relax, it’s up to you.”